

# The Classical Bulletin

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OCTOBER, 1937

No. 1

## Making Caesar Interesting for High-School Boys

BY PAUL A. STAUDER, S. J.  
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We shall, I think, be long in reaching the millennium in which boys will read Caesar with some of the avidity with which they devour the stories of Edgar Wallace. But I do not think the reading of the Gallic War need be drudgery unredeemed, even in the second year of high school. The difficulties of the task are, of course, obvious to anyone who has tried it. The following suggestions are the result of an endeavor to teach the Gallic War as a vital campaign that is of real interest to the modern boy.

High-school boys of today are interested in public affairs. Their fondness for debate has made them alive to current issues, and the depression with its resultant unsettling of conditions has awakened them to problems they will have to face and solve some day. They hear much of the threat of Communism, and their own as well as their parents' straitened circumstances have made many of them more mature than boys were a decade ago. Being interested in current events, they follow the world-wide preparations for war. They are eager to discuss the war in Spain. They have not forgotten the Italian conquest of Ethiopia.

All this furnishes the teacher of the Gallic War with a point of departure in his own campaign to interest his classes in Caesar's conquest of Gaul. What Caesar did in Gaul, Mussolini did in Ethiopia. Both needed land for colonizing; both claimed that war was unavoidable because of border violations. Mussolini is now Rome's dictator; Caesar was once the same. Both dreamed of advancing Rome's empire; both succeeded. The parallel will catch the boys' attention, and the first step toward becoming interested in the Gallic War is taken when they awake to the fact that "Caesar" is not just Latin, but real history as well—and history, too, that has a deep significance for them. The war in Gaul was once the vital issue of real men like themselves, just as much as any live issue of today. It was a matter of life and death for the thousands of soldiers, both Roman and Gallic, who knew they were fighting for or against a great military genius.

Caesar's generalship is another line of approach that will serve to interest boys. They admire courage and brains and cleverness. Belloc, in his book on the Duke of Marlborough, has the following passage on a general's "faculty of command":

Now this term—the faculty of command—is one impossible of definition. . . . It includes so obvious a thing as a right judgment in the choice of subordinates, an instinctive judgment also between the right and the

wrong moment for an order, a reprimand, a confidence; but its true potential, the inner thing which gives it all its value, is some quality in the man which communicates its energy to inferiors, causes it to flow throughout every unit of his command down to the individual private soldier, and brings forth in unison those apparently contradictory things, responsibility and obedience, leaving exactly the right degree of freedom to subordinates. Of this essential, and, as it were, transcendental quality, Power of Command, no analysis is possible; nothing can be said of it save affirmation. It is present, or it is not present: and none can tell you why.<sup>1</sup>

Read and explain this to your class, and Caesar's speech to his men on the eve of the campaign against Ariovistus, or his dash into the front ranks during the battle with the Nervii, will prove a striking illustration of the power a magnetic personality has to transform quaking men into valiant legionaries.

Mommsen's characterization of Caesar<sup>2</sup> will furnish ample material with which the teacher can build up his portrayal of Caesar the man, and Caesar the general; and this appeal to the boys' natural tendency to hero worship will do much to stir up interest.

Most people enjoy a good fight when they are not in it. Boys especially do. A detailed explanation of the strategy, with blackboard diagrams of the tactical maneuvers of battles, never fails to hold their interest.<sup>3</sup> A good example of Caesar's strategy is the surprise attack he attempted against the Helvetians, when they encamped at the foot of a hill not far from his own camp. He sent his lieutenant, Labienus, with two legions, with orders to ascend this hill from the rear and take up a position behind and above the enemy. He himself, setting out shortly after, approached the Helvetians with his remaining legions from the front. Labienus was to await his signal, so that they could attack from front and rear at the same time. Meanwhile an officer whom Caesar had sent ahead to reconnoiter, mistaking the standards, reported that the enemy, not Labienus, occupied the summit of the hill. The plan failed, for while Labienus was awaiting the signal, Caesar led his legions back to camp, realizing only too late that his officer had made a mistake (*quod non vidisset pro viso sibi renuntiasse*). The plan was quite simple, but ingenious, and the boys will like it.

The battle with the Helvetians shows Caesar's skill in tactical movement. T. Rice Holmes has a vivid account of this complete Roman victory.<sup>4</sup> It is not a waste of time to spend an hour on it as a sort of résumé that will give the boys a unified impression of the battle. One of them may read the account while the teacher diagrams on the blackboard the advance of the armies into position, interspersing necessary explanations as the battle progresses through its several phases to the final rout of the Helvetian host. An occasional period spent in this

way will help to tide the class over the plodding days of parsing, translation, and syntax work.

Another device that will arouse class interest is the use of technical military terms and current expressions in translation, and especially in explanations of the text and presentation of necessary background.

For example, "ambassador" is always better than "legate" for *legatus*; "general," where it applies, is better for *dux* than "leader." "Diplomatic mission" is a good term for *legatio*; "rear guard" and "vanguard" are the standard expressions for *novissimum agmen* and *primi nostri*; *castra movere* is, of course, "to break camp," while *concursum militum* will be equivalent to our "massed troops" or the "concentration of troops"; *concilium* is often our "council of war." If the teacher is persistent in his use of these terms, the class will quickly take them up; and such translations, besides making the study more real, will, after the exact meaning of the phrases has been understood, do away with the sort of literal translations that have done their share toward deadening and discrediting the Gallic War.

Then in rapid reviews and explanations, such terms as "Roman and anti-Roman factions, artillery, infantry, sortie, sally, skirmish, reconnoiter, siege operations, alliances, political intrigues, Roman bankers, popular party, levy or enlist or draft troops, commissary department, forced marches," will not only add relish to class-room discussions, but above all produce an atmosphere of reality. The events in Gaul were real to Caesar because of their results to him; they should be "real" to us because of the light they shed on present-day events.

Boys will ask, "What are hostages?" when the word occurs, and a brief explanation of the use made of them in the Spanish war is the best means of giving the class a realization of their importance in Caesar's campaigns.

Of course all this will not, and is not intended to, take the work out of Latin study, but it will add spice to it. And even the routine drillwork of parsing and translation of difficult passages can be enlivened by presenting it as a problem or puzzle. Boys will wave their hands frantically to be allowed to translate a passage or explain a construction that someone else "has not done just quite right." We have had about fifteen boys translate a short but difficult sentence, with some of them trying it two or three times before we were satisfied. It is surprising to what a pitch of enthusiasm this procedure can stir youngsters.

Another means to create interest in review is to let some of the brighter boys each explain a chapter to the class (they must of course sit at the teacher's desk!), and then, as it were, defend the explanation against all comers. The class will be merciless, but everyone will like the performance, and will want his turn and prepare diligently for it. The class will have a good review, and the boy who has explained a chapter will know at least that much Latin almost perfectly.

These are, of course, only a few suggestions, and every teacher's ingenuity will find additions to and modifications of them, but they have all been tried and found practical and effective in the matter of creating interest.

#### Notes

1. Hilaire Belloc, *The Tactics and Strategy of the Great Duke of Marlborough*; Arrowsmith: Bristol, 1933; p. 6.
2. Theodor Mommsen, *The History of Rome*. Translation by The Rev. William P. Dickson, D. D., Bentley: London, 1867. Vol. IV, Bk. v, p. 450 ff.
3. T. Rice Holmes, *Caesar's Conquest of Gaul*; Macmillan, 1903, has excellent accounts of all the battles and very valuable maps.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 33 ff. There is a note, by the way, on the psychology Caesar displays in his dealings with the soldiery, in the BULLETIN for March '37, second column.

#### A Latin Theme Based on Caesar B. G. V, 3.

The subjoined exercise is meant to show how Caesar's simple words and phrases can be used to express distinctly modern ideas. After reading Chapter 3 of Book V, the student is in possession of almost all he needs for a correct rendering. The few expressions thrown in for padding are easily supplied by the teacher.

1. Italy has by far the best cavalry in Europe at the present day.
  2. The State of Illinois extends as far as the Mississippi.
  3. At the last elections Roosevelt and Landon were candidates for president.
  4. No sooner was the president's arrival known than people flocked to meet him.
  5. The people of Canada protested to King George their unswerving loyalty.
  6. The Australians, too, swore eternal allegiance to the English Crown.
  7. Russia boasts the largest infantry in the world.
  8. During the war, the children were taken to a place of safety in the woods.
  9. Men too old to bear arms were cut down by the enemy.
  10. The Japanese have begun to prepare for war and mobilize their army.
  11. The French recently made overtures to Hitler.
1. Civitas Italiae (Italorum) longe plurimum totius Europae equitatu valet.
  2. Civitas Illinoisiorum Mississippium tangit.
  3. Proximis comitiis Rooseveltius et Landonius de principatu contenderunt.
  4. Simulacque de praesidis adventu cognitum est, multi ad eum venerunt.
  5. Canadenses regi Georgio se suosque semper in officio futuros confirmarunt.
  6. Australes quoque nunquam se ab amicitia regum Anglorum defecturos confirmarunt.
  7. Russi maximas se habere copias peditum dicunt. — Russi habent—.
  8. In bello pueri in silvam abditii sunt.
  9. Qui per aetatem in armis esse non poterant, ab hostibus interfecti sunt.
  10. Iaponi equitatum peditatumque cogere et bellum parare instituerunt.
  11. Galli nuper legatos ad Hitlerum miserunt.

In rendering these simple sentences, all the student is required to do is to lift bodily from Caesar just what is needed to clothe the modern thought in a Latin dress. But if the theme is simple, the possibilities of variation are unlimited, and there is ample room for the individual teacher to bring his ingenuity into play. Variety can be secured by filling in details (to suit the pupils' special vocabulary), by fusing several sentences into one, by a change of construction. Thus, after a first rendering of the theme as it stands, a subjunctive may be introduced, as in sentence 7: "Dubito Russine nunc maximas habeant copias peditum."

Another reason for making the basic theme simple is to enable the pupil to utilize as much of Caesar as pos-

sible. There is a great advantage in this, for it helps him to assimilate without much ado all the syntax, all the idiom, all the rhythm, all the euphony inherent in the word order of the original. His Latin will not be "made Latin," but will contain the *ipsissima verba* of a master of style. And we recall Horace's dictum:

Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem  
Testa diu.

The many purposes which the rendering of English into Latin can be made to serve are so manifest that no teacher will drop this "daily dozen" without a cogent reason. Besides solidifying the student's knowledge of grammar, themework provides an outlet for self-expression. This urge to express oneself in a foreign language is a step to culture. Themework may also help the pupil to relate ancient Latin to his everyday life. Catholic students that study for the priesthood can without much difficulty be made to see that the Latin acquired at school through practice in composition will stand them in good stead in later life.

J. A. K.

### The First Business of the Classical Teacher

BY E. K. RAND  
Harvard University

In general I do not believe that classical teachers in the schools are to blame for the condition of the classics. Of course, the ancient authors are related to our day in many ways, and the skillful teacher should suggest this fact from time to time. It is his first business, however, to teach the elements of Greek and Latin and the art of reading at sight simple Greek and Latin prose. I heartily disapprove the present tendency to give a fictitious interest to elementary school textbooks in Greek and Latin by equipping them with sensational illustrations which often are sentimental and misleading. A teacher should make just Greek and Latin interesting, since interesting they are. They should be presented with authority as vital things for learners, whether the learners like them or not. One day they will find out.

The real blame attaches to the colleges that have given up the requirement of Greek and Latin for the A. B. degree. Harvard, I am glad to say, still holds firm to the Latin requirement. In the face of the questionable educational experiments that are flooding our country today, classical teachers, I believe, should simply insist that Greek and Latin are in themselves among the best subjects for the training of young minds, and that the avenues opened by Greek and Latin grammar conduct to those pleasant fields in which true culture dwells. In a word, students of the classics were accurately described by old Ausonius centuries ago as those who were bound to "pluck the sweet flower of the bitter root":

capturi dulcem fructum radicis amarae.

The trend of modern educational theory, it seems to me, is to encourage in young breasts the idea that they can pick the flowers that grow from no roots at all.

Of course, we classical teachers may have a chance now and then to address a larger audience than our classroom. On such occasions we should not, I believe, present apologies or defences for the ancients. They

need none. They can speak for themselves if we only allow them. An attitude of defence arouses one of combat on the other side. We should rather appear as those who possess some good thing which we should like to share with others. On the other hand, our attitude toward the "educational" follies of the day should be unremittingly aggressive. We should fight to have Greek and Latin prescribed—not for all, of course, but for those who are prepared for the higher study of Arts and Letters. We should insist that there is such a thing as intellectual training and that Greek and Latin are important means of securing it. We can tell the public that the ancients offer us a royal robe of learning, fine in texture and lasting—not the "Ersatz" suits of blotting paper that theorists are contriving today. Nor should we worry about the twilight of the classics in a world devoted to natural science and sociology. The best representatives of these vital interests of the human mind are well aware of the treasures of antiquity. If we continue to keep open the avenues that lead to these, there will sooner or later be a new turn in their direction. For the culture of the ancients is too good to be permanently lost.

### My Bed Is a Boat\*

BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

My bed is like a little boat;  
Nurse helps me in when I embark;  
She girds me in my sailor's coat  
And starts me in the dark.

At night I go on board and say  
Good-night to all my friends on shore;  
I shut my eyes and sail away  
And see and hear no more.

And sometimes things to bed I take,  
As prudent sailors have to do;  
Perhaps a slice of wedding-cake,  
Perhaps a toy or two.

All night across the dark we steer:  
But when the day returns at last,  
Safe in my room, beside the pier,  
I find my vessel fast.

\*Printed with the kind consent of the publishers from "A Child's Garden of Verses," South Seas Edition of *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*, Vol. XIV, p. 20. N. Y. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925.

### Mihi Lectus Instar Navis Est

BY A. F. GEYSER, S. J.  
Campion, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin

Mihi lectus est navicula:  
Componor a nutricula,  
Navali tegor tunica,  
Cum nigrant noctis tenebrae.

In navem noctu prodeo;  
"Valete cuncti," clamito;  
Ocellis clausis dormio,  
Nil cernens, nihil audiens.

Nautarum more provido,  
In lectum mecum affero  
Mustaci quid, vel recubo  
Cum pila vel crepundiis.

Per nigram noctem vehimur;  
Sed mane sol cum oritur,  
Ad molem navis figitur:  
Sum tutus in cubiculo.



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Vol. XIV

OCTOBER, 1937

No. 1

## Editorial

We are happy to open the new volume of the CLASSICAL BULLETIN with a good word for Cæsar. The Gallic War (for we are not concerned with the Civil) has its blemishes, its unlovely spots, its dreary wastes, and there is a fear voiced at times that the modern boy or girl cannot be put to reading Cæsar and — live. Such an apprehension is unfounded. Admitting the dullness of much of Cæsar's narrative as well as certain intricacies mainly springing from his fondness for indirect speech, we are not willing to put the Gallic War on the Index of forbidden high-school texts.

Our opening article shows what classical teachers who believe in Cæsar have always felt to be the truth about him: the reading of his Gallic War need not be drudgery pure and simple. There are ways of making it interesting and dynamic. All depends on the proper approach. Cæsar will be dead if we kill him; he will be alive in proportion as we train our pupils to feel that his psychology, his strategy, his faculty of command, his knowledge of human nature, are "modern" and strictly up-to-date. The motives, the issues, the risks of his wars in Gaul were the same as such things are wont to be today. And so the Gallic War fulfills a condition which any ancient classic should fulfill to be a vehicle of instruction: it affords "a platform from which we may view the present life."

But it is not merely this relatedness to burning questions of the day that should secure for the Gallic War a permanent place on our curriculum. If we are confident that Cæsar has come to stay, it is mainly because there is a formal advantage of great value derivable from his study, an advantage based upon his language as such. Speaking for students intending to run through the regular course of high-school and college Latin—for students, in other words, that expect to derive from their course a taste for plain yet genuine Latin and a

certain ability to express their own simple thoughts in a Latin worthy of the name yet not beyond their reach—speaking for such, we do not hesitate to consider Cæsar an unexcelled model for imitation. Latin literature is rich in models of style. There is Livy with his stately period well suited to his great prose epic; there is Sallust with his choppy manner which seems to reflect the excitement of the hour; there is Cicero with his ample and well-rounded mode of speech; there is Tacitus with his impassioned narrative and discourse. But where does the young Latinist meet the simple, quiet, steady diction so well suited to the normal expression of restrained and plain thought — where, if not in the Gallic War? Where will he find sentences so lucid and orderly in arrangement that he may venture, some day, to model his own upon them and yet feel that he is speaking or writing real Latin?

The ancients were well aware of the qualities of Cæsar's style. Cicero commends him (*Brutus* 261-266) for his *pura et incorrupta consuetudo* and his *elegantia verborum Latinorum*. His vocabulary was distinguished for its "purity"; for Cæsar, the warrior, general, and statesman, was also a grammarian and a purist. His Commentaries are *valde quidem probandi*; *nudi enim sunt et recti*: they are free from "rhetoric," which is, practically, a roundabout way of saying a simple thing. In according Cæsar this praise, Cicero unconsciously pointed him out to us as a wholesome antidote for his own elaborate diction. Horace's *simplex munditiis* might serve as an apt description of Cæsar's neat simplicity. Elsewhere (*Orator* 79) Cicero couples *munditia* and *elegantia* as desirable qualities of style. What Lysias was among the Attic orators, in the matter of purity of diction, that Cæsar is among the Latin writers. Much of what Quintilian says (VIII, iii, 87) of the *apheleia* of certain Greek writers is applicable to Cæsar:

*Ipsa illa apheleia simplex et inadfectata habet quendam purum, qualis etiam in feminis amatur, ornatum; et sunt quaedam velut e tenui diligentia circa proprietatem significationemque munditiæ.*

That absolute and unaffected simplicity which the Greeks call *apheleia* has in it a certain chaste ornateness such as we admire also in women, while a minute accuracy in securing propriety and precision in our words likewise produces an impression of neatness and delicacy. (H. E. Butler, in Loeb L.)

In commending Cæsar in our first issue we accept the omen, for it is a favorable one. It gives us an opportunity to reiterate our cherished thesis — that Latin teachers have nothing more important to do than to teach Latin. Cæsar's Latinity is pure, straightforward, simple yet dignified, and not beyond the grasp of the beginner. Here is something the pupil can lay hold of and imitate. Once he has tasted the *simplex munditia* of a normal Latin sentence and felt the differences between it and our modern mode of expression, he will be proof against the confusion that might arise in his mind from admiration of other and more ambitious, more individual styles. He will appreciate the excellences of the latter and delight in their charms when he is ready for them. Meanwhile let the *testa* be once for all imbued with the flavor of simple Latin at its best. It is the privilege of the high-school teacher to work toward

this goal by an intensive study of the best portions of the Gallic War. That there are oases even in Caesar no one will deny.\*

In another issue an eminent Latin teacher on the Pacific Coast will explain what she is doing to make Caesar palatable to her high-school girls.

"Save the classics" is the cry of the hour. The classics are on the defensive, and we are apt to blame outside forces for the plight in which they are. It is wiser to look about us and see whether all is well within the camp. If Latin and Greek are to be saved, it is we that must do the saving, and the saving process must begin at home. By way, therefore, of contributing at least a mite toward the nation-wide discussion, we purpose to publish considered statements from men eminent in the profession that should help us to orient ourselves. The opening number in this "Setting-Our-House-in-Order" Series is a splendid pronouncement from Professor Rand, which we publish in this issue under a caption of our own.

The American Classical League has published an interesting folder, entitled "The Value of the Classics Today: A Cross Section of Current Opinion in the United States." Ranging from one to three or four pithy sentences, these statements of twenty-eight eminent living Americans, representing a wide variety of interests in life, are unanimous in their endorsement of the study of the classics as a preservative of the best in our civilization. We quote the first and last of these statements: "The most shortsighted movement that has affected American education in the past generation has been the attempt to eliminate classical studies from the curricula of secondary schools and of colleges. Classical learning must be kept alive in a society that would evade the ever-threatening lapse of civilization into barbarism" (H. B. Alexander, Professor of Philosophy, Scripps and Claremont Colleges). "Latin trains the mind for systematic devotion to worthy tasks, in spite of all the psychological observations and soft pedagogy to the contrary" (F. P. Woellner, American Academy of Political and Social Science). Price: 2c a copy, postage prepaid in lots of ten or more.

Classical teachers and students are of the noble family of Amphibia: they live both in the past and in the present; in fact, they live in the past for the sake of the present. They sustain their double life by drawing breath both from the fragrant meadows of classical literature and from the more arid tracts of language study.

Language is more than tense and voice and case; it includes word order, rhythm, balance, euphony. Tense,

voice, and case are the raw material wanting the touch of the artist, the skeleton to be clothed with flesh and blood, the *materia prima* prepared for the life-giving soul. The magic that effects the change is composition.

Caesar's murderers in the distant past were, all of them, "honorable men." *Et tu, Brute?*

Attention is called to an announcement recently made by Harvard U. Press to the effect that Professor Edward Kennard Rand has made, for the benefit of preparatory school classes reading Caesar and Virgil, a 12-inch phonograph record, presenting on one side Caesar's *Bellum Gallicum*, Book I, most of Chapter 42, all of Chapter 43, and all but the first few lines of Chapter 44, and on the other side Virgil's *Aeneid*, Introduction and lines 1-33. As the circular says, "This is an unusual opportunity for schools to hear a master of Latin diction read with full appreciation two of the most familiar passages of Latin literature." (Price \$2.50.)

The Oxford U. Press (114 Fifth Avenue, N. Y. City) plans an informal volume in which various men, distinguished in their several fields of learning, will try to convey to the undergraduate what special claims these fields have upon a college man's attention. "The case for Greek and Latin does need some new affirmation, and Professor Rand's essay is certainly one of the most important in the volume." His essay, we may be sure, "will be a classic of its kind." This volume will be published in either the late fall or the mid-winter.

### The Victorians and the Greeks

By JAMES E. TOBIN  
Fordham University

Because we remember the anecdotes surrounding the classical achievements of the early years of Lord Macaulay's life, and pause in amazement at the statement that he set down his findings in *A Compendium of Universal History From the Creation to Modern Times*, begun when he was only seven, many of us are overready to apply the historian's breadth of interest (not to be confused with breadth of knowledge, which he lacked), to the careers of all the other writers of the late nineteenth century. Many of us go further and, praising the Victorians for maintaining so necessary a reverence for the past, blame these our times for beginning the militant disregard for Athens and Rome.

Limiting our discussion, for the sake of single approach, to the decline of Greek, it is true that early scorn has developed into almost total indifference within the last few decades. Mythology is no longer understood, although Bulfinch has been retained as a source book for advertising agencies which have exhausted other trade-mark names. Hebe is metamorphized into a ginger ale, Diana is become a mop, and Orpheus, a cinema!

\*Miss Spilman's essay on "Learning to Read in the Latin Order" (*Classical Journal*, 24, 323 ff.) is a study in Caesar's sentence structure. Caesar's art of composition has been examined by Hans Oppermann, *Caesar*; Leipzig: Teubner, 1933. There is a sense-lined presentation of the Helvetian War in Miss Celia Ford's *First Year Latin*.

Even the poets who preferred the Greeks are cast aside. Pope praising Homer is become more ancient than his source. What sympathy is left for Cowper, leaving his cauliflowers to tend his classics?

I have a thought that when my present labours . . . are ended, I may go to school again, and refresh my spirits by a little intercourse with the Mantuan and the Sabine bard; and perhaps by a reperusal of some others, whose works we generally lay by at that period of life when we are best qualified to read them, when, the judgment and the taste being formed, their beauties are least likely to be overlooked. . . . If you could meet with a secondhand Virgil, ditto Homer, both Iliad and Odyssey, together with a Clavis, for I have no Lexicon, and all tolerably cheap, I shall be obliged to you if you will make the purchase. . . . It is rather strange that at my time of life, after a youth spent in classical pursuits, I should want (i. e. lack) them.

What schoolboy now can any longer comprehend Keats' thrill in turning Chapman's pages? And wasn't George Gissing silly to prefer hunger, rather than leave Herodotus at a midday sale? And for him to read Greek, merely for the fun of it?

Do little but read Greek. I thank heaven that I shall very soon have as tolerable a command of Greek as anyone who is not a professed scholar. That has been my ambition for many years, but Greek takes a long, long learning.

The necessity of "long, long learning" is one reason for its unpopularity in an educational era when learning has nearly reached the capsule stage. One of the evil heritages of Victorianism has been the unwillingness to think things through to their beginnings. For economic, for social, particularly for religious, reasons, most of them were afraid to do that. See what happened to Newman, they said, shaking their heads!

And so we have the present spectacle of Greek, lying on the floor of the senate chamber, stabbed by more college presidents than Caesar was by conspirators. Tradition was overthrown then, as it was to be later at Versailles (or was it Serajevo?). The pace to catch up with an empty future is a killing one. The result is the appalling spectacle of thousands of frenzied intellectuals trying to subsist on lotus leaves.

But the seeds of the lotus, like the seeds of the conspiracy against Caesar's life, like the seeds of Serajevo, were planted long before. Greek suffered from its friends a century ago, more than from its enemies.

Newman saw in Aeschylus "lessons concerning duty and religion, justice and providence" — a totally different concept from Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, in which both painter and picture were rather childish rebels, foolhardy in their rage against authority, especially "the falsehood and the force of him who reigns supreme," and in defense of "heaven-oppressed mortality." The moderns prefer the younger to the wiser man.

The early century was awkwardly adolescent in its admiration for the "Enlightenment," the release of civilization, the torn and muddy placards from the gutters of revolutionary Paris. It was irredeemably romantic, and believed the world beginning again — before Adam's pride and Michael's flaming sword. It was in

love with shibboleths and shoddy Utopias. Their conception of Greece was one of the latter.

Byron theatricalized the Greek spirit — "The isles of Greece. The isles of Greece . . ." — as a dying actor might have. When he went off to die there, Greece became a household word. But not classicism; and there is the distinction.

The minor writers wallowed in the sentimental modernizations of Greek drama by the continental playwrights. The times approached the classics as a lark, as they had come to Shakespeare.

Whatever Matthew Arnold's sins, he helped to check the wasteful stream with as much determination as Dryden had dammed the distorted imagery of his day, and out of the same conviction. Romanticism, to Arnold, was mere emotion, not vitalized by intellect. He had hopes for Greek as a saving force. In his *Discourses in America* he wrote:

The instinct for beauty is set in human nature, as surely as the instinct for knowledge is set there, or the instinct for conduct. If the instinct for beauty is served by Greek literature and Greek art as it is served by no other literature and art, we may trust to the instinct for self-preservation in humanity for keeping Greek as part of our culture.

But Arnold gave up too soon. He turned from a defense of his classical heritage to a concern over "the instinct for conduct." He became lost in the Charybdis of religious conviction, when, like Shelley, he left the true spirit of Greece for a fling at philosophy.

The other prophets of the day did no better for the sounder intellectual tradition of the classics. Carlyle looked at the Hebrew prophets for inspiration, and at the false French ones of the eighteenth century. Ruskin sought to evolve lessons from cracked canvases and grinning gargoyles, cumulus clouds and the twigs of trees. Morris picked letters from a type font, created an uncomfortable chair, was beaten by a policeman in a riot, and will achieve immortality through a biography of Bernard Shaw.

On both sides of the Atlantic, the novelists were far distant from the classical ideal and, like the dramatists, turned to solve "modern" problems with "modern" language and with "modern" ethics.

When Arnold lectured in America, he expressed his hope for Greek, quoted above. But he failed to reckon with this "modernity." Americans secretly preferred the uncouth Dickens, despite the insulting notes the latter published after his lecture tour. Arnold failed to foresee the effect of Whitman, the vogue of what Laurence Stallings had so excellently called "billboard poetry for the American continent," of *nouveau riche* architecture, of Mark Twain's satiric picture of Europe and of all tradition, of Emerson's funeral sermons against "the phraseology of some old molded nation in another country," against history, "an impertinence [since] the centuries are conspirators against the sanity and authority of the soul," against the dependence in any way upon "the Past and the Distant." Even Emerson's own Plato died in so narrow a closet.



In summary here, Victorianism turned from the classics as literature to the classics as philosophy, then to philosophy apart from the classics, then to their individual notions of "self-reliance." A century, searching for standards, sometimes frantically, sometimes idly, allowed them to slip out of hand.

This is not to say that there were no authors interested in Greek in the winter months of Victoria's reign. Newman was a last great voice, crying from a lonely Dublin dining hall that the concrete of the classics had to be poured into the foundations of education. Like Arnold, he wrote in the tradition of the Grecian dramatists; the one gave us the form-perfect *Merope*, the other that exquisite poetic drama, *The Dream of Gerontius*. Browning caught something of the classic spirit in *Balaustion*; his wife in her translations. Patmore and Thompson restored the ode to its place of dignity. Aubrey de Vere gathered *Antique Gems* into twenty volumes. Lionel Johnson, a classicist in temperament and artistry, did more than any of these, and was apparently the last of the true voices.

The more popular Swinburne and Pater must be aligned with the earlier group. There is a passing breath of the Aegean in *Atalanta in Calydon*, as there is in Pater's *Greek Studies*. Both men, however, became philosophers, and disgraced Greek by evolving, from their association with it, the antique nonsense that "life is a series of moments, each lived as exquisitely as possible." Classic restraint disappeared before neohedonism on the one hand, and a wandering between epieureanism and stoicism on the other. The Renaissance had let more vampires out of the box than poor Pandora ever dreamed of!

Greek had become a way of escape for a group groping through Despond. It had become a dead thing, not living poetry. It was no more than a symbol: the baleful glass of Hippoceras drunk by Keats, or the "wistful fatalism" of Pater retelling the myth of Demeter. It was the perfume rising from Dido's pyre.

It should have been, and perhaps it yet can be, as Thompson expressed it in "Paganism Old and New," a thing of beauty, an antidote against

the dryadless woods regarded chiefly as potential timber; the grimy street, the grimy air, the disfiguring statues, the Stygian crowd; the temple of the reigning Geslasma, which mocks the name of theatre; last and worst, the fatal degradation of popular perception, which has gazed so long on ugliness that it takes her to its bosom.

This is not Greek as a religion; this is not the taste of the pomegranate; this is Greek as enthusiasm—a word which itself is dying like the tongue which gave it sound—and sense.

### The Challenge to Secondary Latin\*

By WILLIAM CHARLES KORFMACHER  
Chairman for Missouri, Committee on the Present  
Status of Classical Education of the CAMWS

Latin has not in any sense experienced a serenely undisturbed place in the scheme of American youth-training. Frequently enough, in the decades immedi-

ately preceding our own, it has been faced with questioners both within<sup>1</sup> and without its own immediate ranks. Hostile criticism by its foes and constant self-appraisal by its friends have led to many changes in content, in method, and in avowed objectives, the most sweeping "reforms" in recent times resulting, of course, upon the recommendations of The Classical Investigation.<sup>2</sup>

Thus it is no novelty to realize that Latin, and more particularly secondary Latin, is under assault today. Classicists have learned to expect opposition. They have been schooled to hear the tocsin in the tower, not as a summons to fanatical and emotional reassertions of the enduring values of their subject, but rather as a call to calm and intelligent examinations of the opposition's claims and to a readiness to introduce, if necessary, reasonable accommodations in their own methods and technique.

Today the assault is from the front of the social sciences, and from those more extreme fringes of educational theory which interpret with literal entirety the catch-words of "education for social control," "progressive education," and the "core curriculum." In their ultimate form, such theories would make the high school essentially a training-place for "the new society" and would rigidly reject any subject which did not directly and immediately minister to such instruction.

As is generally the case, there is more than a modicum of truth in the claims even of such extremists. It is true that secondary education today is the possession of the masses, and that therefore the training which a few generations ago was the exclusive privilege of the gentleman's son cannot, without modification, be of equal service to all high school pupils today. Undeniably, again, the social sciences have revealed in their recent developments widespread possibilities for good in the service of the nation. Unquestionably, too, a larger appreciation of his privileges and duties as a citizen and a member of the complex organism of modern society should be roused in the student, particularly in the formative years of his secondary training.

Yet the admission of deficiencies in traditional education is in no sense tantamount to an acquiescence in wholesale jettison of past subjects and methods. Experience throughout the history of the race amply testifies that no educational system, no matter how carefully devised and anxiously tried, is quite perfect. Nor have we ground for believing, in the rather haphazard state of theorizing and uncertainty on the part of advocates of extreme change, that the welter of confused contemporary speculations would eventually emerge in a new educational dawn of Elysian excellence.

But for the good in the new proposals classicists should be the first to extend the hand of welcome, the first to inquire whether perhaps there are possibilities latent in the teaching of secondary Latin which have not as yet been fully plumbed. The presence of teachers of ancient and modern languages at a panel discussion of the Foreign Language Section, Department of Supervisors and Directors of Instruction of the National Educational Association, Department of Superintendence, at New

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Orleans on February 22 last,<sup>3</sup> is evidence of the willingness of the languages to cooperate reasonably and intelligently with the new movements.

Furthermore, it should be evident to every teacher of secondary Latin that there are in the language abundant opportunities whereby he may realize many of the commendable objectives in present educational theory and practice,<sup>4</sup> particularly in reference to social aims. The content of Latin Literature is large; and it has long since been agreed that several books of Caesar, a few orations of Cicero, and six books of Vergil do not comprise a sacrosanct and immutable high school Latin course. Nor is there any opposition between sound classical pedagogy and an effort to adapt secondary Latin to the interest of the pupil.<sup>5</sup>

But classicists are not now ready to admit — nor, if they are true to themselves and to their subject, will they ever be ready to admit — that man is merely a *social* being. He is an *individual* as well; and no education which looks *only* to the preparing of man for society is a true education. Quite apart from obvious religious and ethical considerations, it should be insisted that a pupil has a right to the awakening and developing of his aesthetic instincts, to an introduction to the glories of art and literature, to a preparation for those cultural pleasures and appreciations which he may enjoy and foster throughout his life. Such experiences are individual, and they can come, generally speaking, only through a universal and skilled teaching of literature.<sup>6</sup>

*Intelligent awareness*, then, should be the watchword of classical teachers in the present crisis. There can be no excuse for ignorance of what is going on. Classicists are organizing in a campaign of education, cooperation, and defense.<sup>7</sup> Much good has been done and much more is expected from the Committee on the Present Status of Classical Education of The Classical Association of the Middle West and South, headed by Professor A. Pelzer Wagener of the College of William and Mary as National Chairman. Pamphlet material is available for circularization.<sup>8</sup> *The Classical Journal*, organ of The Classical Association of the Middle West and South, has been particularly generous in making its pages available to informative and inspirational material pertinent to the present situation.

It is, therefore, the duty of every classical teacher, be he laboring in high school, in college, or in the more ethereal realms of the graduate school, to inform himself of the contemporary challenge and to lend his active support in the cause he holds dear.

#### Notes

1. See the summaries of the work of earlier committees in Mason D. Gray, *The Teaching of Latin* (New York, D. Appleton and Company, 1929), pp. 1-7.
2. See especially *The Classical Investigation—Part One, General Report: A Summary of Results with Recommendations for the Organization of the Course in Secondary Latin and for Improvements in Methods of Teaching* (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1924). This work has, of course, been the guide to many of the newer textbooks in secondary Latin.
3. See A. Pelzer Wagener, "The New Orleans Panel Discussion," *The Classical Journal* 32 (May 1937), 449-454.

4. See A. Pelzer Wagener, "The Adaptation of Objectives in Ancient Language Teaching to Present Educational Practice," *The Classical Journal* 32 (May, 1937), 455-466. Note that the April, 1937, number of *Education* was devoted exclusively to the classics, under the editorship of Professor B. L. Ullman of the University of Chicago, who took as his thesis "Latin as It Is, Not as It Was."
5. That our English colleagues are experiencing a pressure against the classics is clear from the article of A. Eustance, "The Confession of a Latin Specialist," *Greece and Rome* 6 (May 1937), 165-169.
6. See Eugene Tavenner, "An Invitation to all Lovers of Literature," *The Classical Journal* 32 (October, 1936), 1-3; the editorial has been reprinted and is available upon request at the editorial offices of the journal. The sympathetic attitude of the modern language group is reflected in Carleton Brown, "The Attack on the Castle," *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 51 (1936), 1294-1306.
7. See Eugene Tavenner, "The Year," *The Classical Journal* 32 (June 1937); 514-516.
8. *Inter alia*, see Francis P. Donnelly, S. J., "Latin—The Channel of Our Civilization," a radio address later published in the *Fordham Ram* (March 21, 1937); obtainable free in reprint form upon application to the author, Fordham University, New York City.

#### Book Review

**Othloni Libellus Proverbiorum:** Recensuit Adnotationibusque Criticis et Illustrativis, Indice Nominum et Rerum Instruxit Gulielmus Carolus Korfmacher. Chicagini: In Typis Universitatis Loyolaeae. MCMXXXVI.

This excellent critical edition of Othlo's *Libellus Proverbiorum* will be of value not only to students of the classics but also to those in other fields who are interested in proverbs. The author has established a sound text based on all the manuscripts that have thus far come to light. There are three of these containing the whole or the larger part of the work. One, *Codex Monacensis Latinus* 14490 (E), was written by Othlo himself in the 11th century. Certain corrections (E2) seem to have been added by him several years after the work was originally copied. *Codex Monacensis Latinus* 18937 (T), dating from the 11th century, is also in the hand of Othlo in the opinion of Prof. Paul Lehmann. The author is inclined to doubt this, believing rather that this *codex* was written by another scribe, copying from some autograph other than E. In either case T is very valuable, though less so than E, since it seems to antedate the E2 readings, which represent Othlo's own revision of his work. The third MS. (P) apparently is a copy of T. Three additional *codices* dating from the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries, contain excerpts from the work. Variant readings in all of these as well as in the earlier printed editions are listed. The sources of practically all the proverbs have been traced and are recorded at the bottom of each page above the *apparatus criticus*. The text is preceded by an introduction in Latin which provides useful information about the use of proverbs in teaching and about the life and writings of Othlo.

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CHAUNCEY EDGAR FINCH

Language is intensely national; it is a reflex of the inner mental habit of a people.—S. S. Laurie



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